



NEWS RELEASE

A Century of
Water for the West
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**Mid-Pacific Region
Sacramento, California**

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Jeffrey S. McCracken
916-978-5100

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**DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE
FOR THE INSTREAM TRANSFER AND FORBEARANCE
OF WATER RIGHTS ON MILL CREEK**

Reclamation has released a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the 5-year instream transfer and forbearance of diversion of Orange Cove Irrigation District's (OCID) water rights on Mill Creek for public review and comment. Under the proposed action, OCID would forbear the right to divert up to 15 cubic feet per second of flow in Mill Creek between April and June and in October of each year. This instream transfer of water rights is being carried out by the Department of the Interior through its Water Acquisition Program (WAP) consistent with the requirements of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act. The WAP is an interagency cooperative program involving Reclamation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The specific purpose of the proposed action is to increase instream flows to aid the migration of spring-run and fall-run Chinook salmon in Mill Creek. There is a need to enhance survival of these migrating anadromous fish species by augmenting existing instream flows, thus helping them to reach upstream spawning grounds.

The Draft EA and FONSI were prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The draft EA describes the potential environmental impacts, both beneficial and adverse, associated with the proposed action. The documents are available for a 15-day comment period that ends Friday, September 20, 2002. Copies of the draft documents are available online at www.mp.usbr.gov/cvpia/wap/index.htm under Environmental Documents. Written comments should be sent to the Bureau of Reclamation, Water Acquisition Program Manager, MP-410, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, CA 95825. For additional information or to request a copy of the draft documents, contact Tim Rust at 916-978-5516, TDD 916-978-5608.

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A contemporary water management agency, Reclamation is the largest wholesale water supplier in the United States, with operations and facilities in the 17 Western states. Today, these facilities include 348 reservoirs with the capacity to store 245 million acre-feet of water. Reclamation projects supply one out of five Western farmers with irrigation water for approximately 10 million farmland acres. Reclamation facilities also provide water to about 31 million people for municipal and industrial uses. In addition, Reclamation is the nation's second largest producer of hydroelectric power, generating more than 42 billion kilowatt hours of energy each year from 58 hydroelectric power plants. Its facilities also

provide substantial flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits.